

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SANAA 001971

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/10/2013

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#) [TERFIN](#)

SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER ALIMI ON AL-MOAYED, TRAINING AND COLE ESCAPEES

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull, Reasons 1.5 (b & d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Interior Minister Alimi again pressed Ambassador August 5 for US agreement to return Sheikh al-Moayed to Yemen for trial, in response to FBI invitation for Yemeni officials to visit New York and review evidence following al-Moayed's extradition. Ambassador and Legatt-Designate reiterated firm USG intent to extradite and urged Yemeni government to cooperate in al-Moayed case and urge al-Moayed himself to cooperate. Current training of Interior forces was assessed favorably by both sides and future training discussed generally. Legatt-Designate proposed formation of a joint task force to pursue Cole escapees. Alimi was cool to the idea, but agreed to study it. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) Ambassador, Legatt-Designate Gaudin, Special Agent Fernandez and RSO Laas met Interior Minister Alimi for nearly two hours August 5, to follow up previous discussion with President Saleh and invitation for Yemeni officials to come to New York to meet with American prosecutors and review the al-Moayed case subsequent to his extradition.

3. (C) To start, Ambassador praised Alimi on excellent crime scene exercise which he had attended that morning on the outskirts of Sanaa. Ambassador praised Yemeni participants for their enthusiasm and qualifications. He also praised FBI trainers for their expertise. Ambassador noted that this training had direct relevance to our counter terrorism efforts and was funded by the Diplomatic Security Bureau of the State Department. Alimi welcomed the training and said it would serve as one of the bases for the new CT capability that he was forming within the Ministry of Interior.

4. (C) Discussion turned to extradition of al-Moayed. Minister Alimi said he, PSO Chief Qamish and President Saleh had all considered the letter of the Legatt-designate (Para 8) which contained particulars of the US case and an invitation for Yemeni officials to come to New York City to review all evidence and cooperate with US prosecutors. Alimi said the facts in the letter broke little new ground. The Yemenis continue to consider al-Moayed a relatively unimportant player and one best handled in the Yemeni courts. He reiterated previous Yemeni offers to work with US authorities in bringing al-Moayed to justice in Yemen. In response, Ambassador and Legatt-designate reiterated US determination to extradite al-Moayed and cautioned the Minister that previously seemingly unimportant terrorists subsequently played important roles in facilitating attacks. Extensive discussion ensued and Alimi indicated that it is unlikely Yemeni authorities will accept the invitation. Ambassador stressed that cooperation on al-Moayed's part and between the US and Yemen offered the best opportunity to deal with the political fallout of the al-Moayed case.

5. (C) Discussion eventually turned to future training of Interior Ministry CT Unit. Legatt-Designate sketched training programs that have been successfully done in Indonesia and Pakistan. In so doing, he noted that such training falls within the purview of the State Department ATA Program, but he would recommend that the FBI support such training if agreed. RSO noted funding for such training would have to be obtained. Ambassador said that US would explore the possibility based on the Minister's interest. Legatt-designate then noted that the FBI hopes to have slots for one or two Yemenis at the FBI Academy and suggested that the Yemeni facilitator in the current training program, Major Qatan, would be an excellent candidate.

6. (C) Legatt-Designate then noted Ambassador's previous demarche to President Saleh on urgency to recapture escaped Cole suspects as well as BG Robeson's similar Demarche to Alimi August 4. Legatt-Designate proposed that a joint task force be formed with the sole purpose of recapturing prominent Cole escapees. FBI participants would bring their expertise and capabilities to the effort. Such a step would signal from the Yemeni side complete determination to bring these wanted individuals to justice. In response, Alimi expressed Yemeni determination to recapture the escapees. He noted the significant changes that have occurred in Yemeni security services in the wake of the escape. The issue currently was to develop leads, follow-up and re-arrest. Ambassador pointed out that development of leads was exactly where the FBI could help and extraordinary efforts are now

required in this regard. Alimi said he would study the proposal.

17. (C) COMMENT: Minister Alimi was obviously conflicted in this meeting. The al-Moayed case presents significant political costs here, and the Minister is accurately reflecting President Saleh's strong personal preference that al-Moayed be returned to Yemen. The Minister is also responsible for security of Americans in Yemen and will have to manage any threats that result from an extremely unpopular handover. That said, Minister Alimi appreciates acutely the benefits Yemen accrues from CT cooperation with the US and will work to keep that cooperation on track despite inevitable political and security fallout from al-Moayed's extradition.

18. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT OF FBI LETTER TO MINISTER ALIMI:

His Excellency  
Dr. Rashad al-Alimi  
Minister of Interior  
Sana'a  
Excellency:

It is our pleasure to invite three members of your government to visit the Federal Bureau of Investigation's New York City Office. The purpose of the invitation is to discuss the pending United States criminal case against two Yemeni citizens, Mohamed al-Moayad and Mohamed Zayed. We would like to extend this offer for your visit upon completion of all extradition proceedings involving al-Moayad and Zayed. It is believed that this visit will further the spirit of cooperation between our two agencies in combating the global war against terrorism. This request for you to visit the United States is at the expense of our government. A more complete and full disclosure of the facts involved in the case will be made available to you upon your arrival in New York City.

A summary of the case is outlined below:

It initially was reported to the FBI that al-Moayad was involved in supplying money, arms and recruits to mujahideen fighters, i.e., men fighting for extremist Muslim groups such as al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and the separatists in Chechnya and Kashmir. Al-Moayad also stated, in substance, that he has supplied al-Qaeda with arms and communication equipment in the past.

Al-Moayad identified five individuals in New York who were sending money from the United States to al-Moayad. Al-Moayad provided contact telephone numbers for these individuals. Al-Moayad indicated that he received money for the jihad that was collected at a mosque in Brooklyn, NY.

Al-Moayad suggested meeting in Frankfurt, Germany because he and the secretary who was to accompany him could easily get visas to Germany. Al-Moayad also explained that he (al-Moayad) had business to conduct in Germany. Al-Moayad specifically referenced plans to purchase counter-surveillance equipment from a German company, known as PK Electronic International GmbH and Co KG, located in Hamburg, Germany. Al-Moayad showed a typewritten invoice from PK International reflecting al-Moayad's proposed purchase of equipment. The buyer was listed as Ali Ibrahim Elhayek, whom al-Moayad identified as the individual making the purchases on al-Moayad's behalf. Al-Moayad claimed that he wanted the equipment to enable him to conduct counter-surveillance against Yemeni internal security authorities, whom al-Moayad believed might be monitoring him. The invoice reflects the purchase of, among other things, a "Mini Transmitter Detector," a "Wrist Watch Transmitter," a "Wrist Watch Camera Set," "Audio Surveillance Device," "Quartz Controlled Ball Point Pen," "Photographic Surveillance System with Camera and Adapter" and a "Universal Tapping Detector."

The names of people living in the United States were then investigated by the FBI. It was determined that the persons in the U.S. were involved in helping al-Moayad.

On January 7, 2003, Mohamed Zayed and Mohammed al-Moayad arrived in Frankfurt, Germany. On the previous day, an FBI source had a telephone conversation, which was not recorded, with Mohamed Zayed, in which he told the source that al-Moayad and Zayed almost cancelled their trip because of an incident that had occurred in Frankfurt on January 5, 2003, during which the pilot of a small airplane threatened to fly into a building, but that al-Moayad thought the meeting in Frankfurt was too important.

On January 7, 2003, al-Moayad and Mohamed Zayed met a second FBI source and the four men went to dinner. At the direction of the FBI agents, source one and two did not discuss the purpose of their trip and the meeting in Frankfurt at the dinner.

On January 8, 2003 Mohamed Zayed, al-Moayad, source one and source two, had breakfast together and then met in source two's hotel room to discuss business. During a two-hour meeting, which was recorded, source two advised al-Moayad that source two was interested in providing money to support the jihad against America and Zionist governments. Al-Moayad told source two, in part and substance, that al-Moayad had met with Usama bin Laden and discussed matters with bin Laden and that bin Laden says that al-Moayad is his "sheikh" or spiritual leader. Al-Moayad also said that jihad" was al-Moayad's field and that he is connected to terrorist organizations and has prior knowledge of terrorist activities. In response to a question by source two, al-Moayad said he would make inquiries as to whether source two's men could train with terrorist fighters. Towards the end of the meeting, al-Moayad said he would provide source two with names of people in the United States who could transfer money from source two to al-Moayad. The meeting concluded with the four men agreeing to meet again to continue their discussions.

During the January 8, 2003 meeting, source two and al-Moayad were the primary speakers, with source one serving as a translator. Mohamed Zayed was present for the entire meeting and occasionally interjected in the conversation by prompting al-Moayad's responses to questions from source two. For example, at one point, when al-Moayad was having difficulty remembering the name of one of his terrorist contacts, Zayed supplied the name. Zayed also nodded his head in apparent agreement to certain statements made during the meeting. At the outset of the meeting, Zayed questioned the presence of source two's pager on the coffee table, appearing to express concern about the possibility of cameras and recording equipment in the room. At one point during the meeting, al-Moayad said they should swear on the Quran that they will trust each other with respect to the matter of the money and keep it secret, remembering that Allah is watching. In response, all four men, including Mohamed Zayed, stood up and placed their hands on the Quran. At another point during the meeting, al-Moayad pointed to Zayed and told source two that money could be sent through "Mohammed."

In the evening of January 8, 2003, source two met with al-Moayad and Mohamed Zayed in a hotel room. During that meeting, which was recorded, the three men discussed the use of codes when speaking with each other on the telephone.

On January 9, 2003, Mohamed Zayed and al-Moayad again met with both sources. During this conversation, which was recorded, source two asked al-Moayad to identify the group or groups to which source two's money would go, specifically whether source two's money would go to al-Qaeda, or other groups. Al-Moayad responded that the money would be used to support the mujahideen fighters of both al-Qaeda and other groups. Source two asked what the defendant Mohamed Zayed's role was and whether he was someone source two could deal with directly if something happened to al-Moayad. Al-Moayad responded that Zayed was someone he trusted. Source two asked Zayed directly if source two gave Zayed his (source two's) money, would Zayed give it to the people to whom source two wanted it to go. Zayed swore to Allah that he would. Later in the meeting, Zayed suggested that possibly arrangements could be made with members of terrorist groups to allow source two to send money directly to a terrorist group.

Over the course of the meetings in Germany, al-Moayad reiterated to source one that individuals in Brooklyn, New York could be used to facilitate the transfer of money to al-Moayad.

It is believed that the opportunity to review the evidence of the case in its entirety will assist you in fighting the threat imposed by al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. Additionally, it is hoped that at the completion of the review, both your agency and ours, can continue to work together to locate evidence against al-Moayad and other like minded persons in the U.S., Yemen, and abroad.

Sincerely,

Stephen Gaudin  
Legal Attache (Designate)

END TEXT.

HULL